

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For NCRS use only

received

date entered

1. Name

historic The Principia/Page-Park YMCA Gymnasium

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 5569 Minerva

___ not for publication

city, town St. Louis

___ vicinity of

congressional district #1--William Clay

state Missouri

code 29

county St. Louis City

code 510

3. Classification

Category

___ district

☒ building(s)

___ structure

___ site

___ object

Ownership

___ public

☒ private

___ both

Public Acquisition

___ in process

___ being considered

☒ N/A

Status

☒ occupied

___ unoccupied

___ work in progress

Accessible

___ yes: restricted

☒ yes: unrestricted

___ no

Present Use

___ agriculture

___ commercial

___ educational

___ entertainment

___ government

___ industrial

___ military

___ museum

___ park

___ private residence

___ religious

___ scientific

___ transportation

☒ other: YMCA

4. Owner of Property

name McCormack, Baron & Associates

street & number 4625 Lindell Boulevard

city, town St. Louis

___ vicinity of

state MO 63108

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. St. Louis City Hall

street & number Market Street at Tucker Boulevard

city, town St. Louis

state MO 63103

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Missouri State Historical Survey

has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes ☒ no

date June, 1981

___ federal ☒ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records Historic Preservation Program

Missouri Department of Natural Resources, P. O. Box 176

city, town Jefferson City

state MO 65102

7. Description

Condition

☐ excellent
☒ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Principia/Page-Park YMCA Gymnasium was built in two stages. The first and smaller portion designed in 1910 by St. Louis architect A. B. Groves¹ and built at a cost of \$25,000 is now dwarfed by the \$60,000 section designed by William B. Ittner in 1919. (See Site Plan.) Ittner continued Groves' rhythm of arched openings in red brick walls above rough-cut stone foundation but added pilasters between the openings to articulate his seven-bay new gymnasium. (Photo #1) Pediments present a classical profile on all three elevations of the Ittner addition.²

The three-story core connecting the old and new gymnasiums combined Classical Revival pilasters, brick quoins and stone-trimmed pediment with Ittner's patterned-brick trademark³ used sparingly at the third story. (Photo #2) The central core contained (from basement to third story) a swimming pool, a stage and space for stage sets.

The Ittner addition was sited at the sidewalk line at the northwest corner of the block occupied by The Principia so that it would use no more than necessary of the increasingly scarce open space of the expanding campus. (See Section 8.) The stone basement story was designed to read as a continuation of the stone retaining wall constructed along Minerva in 1918 and later continued around most of the block.

William B. Ittner, FAIA, was hired by The Principia because of his reputation as a school architect. Appointed St. Louis Commissioner of School Buildings in 1897, his St. Louis schools in classical and Tudor revival styles brought him a national reputation and practice because of their flexible and functional design. Ittner also designed a major dormitory building for The Principia campus in 1911 (demolished) and thereafter was employed to plan alterations and additions to existing structures. He designed a large new Lower School building (demolished) the same year as the gymnasium addition and prepared a master development plan for the school published as a fund-raising brochure in 1919.⁴

The Gymnasium is to be converted into Section 8 apartments of one and two bedrooms with the assistance of a grant from the St. Louis Community Development Agency. The original configuration of the round-headed windows will be restored by the removal of 1960's plaster in-fill panels and cornices of the 1919 portion of the structure will be repaired. The major entrance will be situated on the south elevation and approached through a barrel vaulted canopy on Ionic columns picking up a feature of the north and south elevations of Ittner's central core.

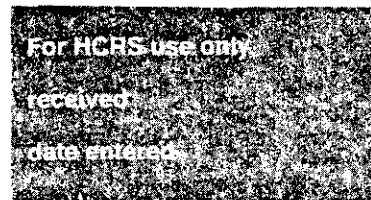
F O O T N O T E S

¹A. B. Groves (1868-1925) was born in Providence, Rhode Island, studied architecture at Cornell University with travel and study in France and Italy before coming to St. Louis in 1891. Both as a member of partnerships and in independent practice, he designed many houses on the private streets of St. Louis as well as important

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

THE PRINCIPIA/PAGE-PARK YMCA GYMNASIUM



Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 1

commercial and institutional buildings and churches, including two Christian Science churches in St. Louis.

²The classical, pedimented Groves east facade was removed and modernized in the 1960's.

³Brick patterning appeared regularly but not exclusively in Ittner's Tudor Revival school designs and his Missouri Athletic Club Building with G.F.A. Brueggeman

⁴"A Plan for Principia," 1915. Archives, Principia College, Elsah, Illinois. William B. Ittner (1864-1936), the son of a successful St. Louis brick manufacturer, was born and educated in St. Louis and, like Groves, studied architecture at Cornell before beginning his career in St. Louis around 1887.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) women's history

Specific dates 1910;1919

Builder/Architect A. B. Groves; William B. Ittner

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Principia/Page-Park YMCA Gymnasium building is significant as the only major surviving structure of the city block campus formerly occupied by The Principia, a school informally begun in 1897 by Mrs. Mary Kimball Morgan for the young children of Christian Scientists. During the half century of Mrs. Morgan's educational and religious leadership, The Principia evolved to include the only four-year college in the world for Christian Scientists and built a reputation for the excellence of its many-faceted educational program. The gymnasium building, constructed in 1910 and 1919 sections designed by prominent St. Louis architects, A. B. Groves and William B. Ittner respectively, was not only the site of school athletic programs for over forty years but of theatre productions, school dances and ceremonies, mock political conventions, cadet corps drills, concerts and lectures. From 1961 to 1976, after the property's purchase by the first black YMCA organization in St. Louis, the gymnasium was the Page-Park YMCA.

The Christian Science movement was begun in 1866 by Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910) of New Hampshire, who initially hoped to restore to established Protestant denominations the element of healing present in primitive Christianity. However, four years after the 1875 publication of her Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures (which became the Christian Science textbook), Mrs. Eddy founded the First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston. Fifteen years later (in 1894) the First Church of Christ, Scientist in St. Louis was established with fifty members. By 1898, the church had two hundred members and other churches had been formed in most major Missouri cities and towns.

Although most Christian Scientists were substantial and successful citizens, they felt strong public antagonism in St. Louis toward their beliefs:

Sermons were being preached against it, and the press contained articles deriding it. Materia medica was indignant at the claim of Christian Science to heal disease, and great efforts were underway to make it illegal for practitioners to engage in the work of healing.

Among the founders of the church in St. Louis were former Methodists Mary Kimball Morgan (1861-1948) and her husband William E. Morgan (1849-1935), an executive of the Ely and Walker Dry Goods Company. Mrs. Morgan, persuaded that the education provided by the public schools of St. Louis was not compatible with Christian Science, in 1897 began teaching her four- and seven-year old sons and

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

THE PRINCIPIA/PAGE-PARK YMCA GYMNASIUM

For HCRS use only
Received
Date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 1

and son of a friend in the carriage house at the rear of her house at 4333 Morgan (now Enright).

Officially founded in 1898 and named The Principia in 1899, by 1900 the school had outgrown two other locations and had begun to accept boarding students including one from as far away as Australia. In 1901 and 1903 installments, the school purchased the entire City Block 3808E, one of nearly thirty-five city blocks in a tract owned and subdivided as "Rose Hill" in the 1870's by former Missouri Governor Hamilton Gamble. Located in the western part of the city not actively developed until the late 1880's and 1890's, the block (approached then by unpaved roads) contained only the huge two and one-half story frame Collins house designed in 1892 by William Albert Swasey, and a frame barn. Until a classroom building was completed in the fall of 1901, the upper story of the barn was first used for classes (with canvas hung to create separate classrooms), then served as a gymnasium and theatre.

Mrs. Morgan is surely a candidate for inclusion in the annals of women who achieved much during a period when American women were expected to appear to be sitting in the back seat.² Assisted by her husband and later by her two sons, she shaped the development of the school well into the 1940's. The often innovative and progressive educational program reflected her Christian Science convictions:

Education is not an accumulation of facts, but an unfoldment of ideas. Gain the principle underlying any work and it is found to be a reflection of Infinite Principle which is the foundation of all true Being.³

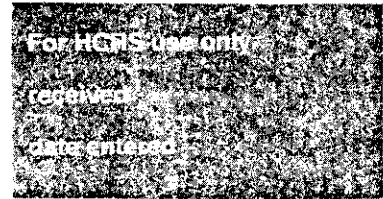
Mrs. Morgan also believed that while no limitations to a child's development should be assumed, individual differences should be recognized. The resulting curriculum evolved by her and the teachers she began hiring in 1898 made use of such manipulative materials as those Froebel developed for kindergarten and Speer's mathematical blocks for grammar school arithmetic. Children moved at different rates through the curriculum and letter grades were not used until 1912.

Because the goal was to educate the "whole child," music, art, drama, crafts and athletics were part of the program as early as 1899.⁴ A Cadet Corps was established in 1905 for boys of high school age. One of the few activities that appears to have provoked controversy among those who shaped the policies of The Principia, the Corps first drilled outdoors and after 1910 in the gymnasium. Although Christian Scientists are opposed to war, those who supported the Corps did so on the grounds that it was character-building, taught discipline, self-control and "the attainment of proper and manly carriage."⁵ (The uniforms worn by the cadets were thought to minimize unseemly concern for dress.) The "California exponent system" of assigning students to competitive high school athletic teams based on stature and maturity was introduced to St. Louis by The Principia in 1928. Still in use by St. Louis area secondary schools, the "A, B, C" team system enables the majority of students to participate in

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

THE PRINCIPIA/PAGE-PARK YMCA GYMNASIUM



Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 2

extramural "varsity" athletics.

The belief in the interrelatedness of knowledge resulted in the 1930's development of integrated "civilization" courses in high school where history, literature, fine arts, architecture and music of historic periods were correlated. The school has always been co-educational:

Meeting together frequently in classrooms and social situations...
boys and girls...are able to overcome any sense of antagonism toward
the opposite sex or any unwholesomely exaggerated interest, begotten
of lack of normal contact.

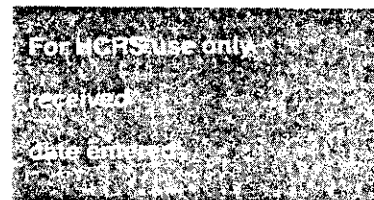
The first quarter of the twentieth century was a period of tremendous growth for Christian Science and The Principia. In St. Louis, seven new churches had been formed by 1925 and enrollment at The Principia during this period increased from 50 to 665. Expanding the program gradually to meet the requests of parents, The Principia in 1901 added an academic high school and in 1910 began one of the first dozen junior college programs (then known as the six-year high school) in the country. Both sections of the gymnasium were built during these years with funds donated or secured by Clarence Howard, then President of Commonwealth Steel Company and later to become Chairman of the Board of General Steel Castings Company. (A longtime trustee of The Principia, Howard over a thirty year period contributed over two million dollars to the school.)

Buildings on adjacent blocks were donated or purchased for school and college dormitories and the corner store at Page and Belt, "Tymony's Corner," was donated for a school store and offices. Many parents bought or rented houses in the vicinity of the school. One former student recalls that the houses on Bartmer from Union to Goodfellow, on Chamberlain from Belt to Goodfellow and on Etzel from Page to Clara were solidly occupied by Christian Scientists. An aerial view of the neighborhood (Photo #3) shows The Principia essentially as it had developed by 1930 with the gymnasium building at the northwest corner of the block.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

THE PRINCIPIA/PAGE-YMCA GYMNASIUM



Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 3

In 1923, plans were made to establish a four-year college on a separate campus and Bernard Maybeck was hired to design its buildings, but the Great Depression slowed the pace of building to the extent that the nucleus of the new campus was not completed until the mid-1930's. Thus, the first graduates of Principia College completed their education in 1934 on the old campus where 421 boarding students and 191 day students ranging from nursery school through college age crowded the buildings and playing fields of City Block 3808E. (The new college installed since 1935 on twenty-four hundred acres on bluffs high above the Mississippi River in Elsah, Illinois, now enrolls about 850 students.)

The Lower and Upper Schools of The Principia began a gradual transfer to a more spacious campus in St. Louis County in the mid-1950's. The same decade saw dramatic changes in Federal projects which resulted in extensive demolition for local Urban Renewal projects. The Pine Street "Y" organized in 1887 as the black branch of the Metropolitan St. Louis YMCA was among the buildings cleared for the Mill Creek Urban Renewal project. Many of the families who used that facility were also displaced and relocated in the area near the former Principia campus. The Pine Street "Y", renamed the Page-Park "Y", began the acquisition of the campus in 1960 and by 1968 owned all of the land and remaining buildings.

Although arson and gradual deterioration drastically reduced the number of buildings on the campus, the Page-Park "Y" successfully initiated or sponsored a number of projects which have had far-reaching effects on the community: the Ebony Fashion Fair-sponsored since 1969 by the Urban League, the Personna Players-a drama group which still rehearses in the gymnasium, the Junior Kindergarten-considered the forerunner of the Federally-sponsored Head Start program, and the locally famous Lancers and Drum and Bugle Corps.

In 1976, the Page-Park "Y" merged with the Northside YMCA as the City North YMCA. Massive new facilities, funded primarily by the Monsanto Corporation, are now under construction at the southeast corner of the block with completion expected in the fall of 1981. Plans for the re-use of the gymnasium (see Section 7) should assure the future for the only important building left from the unique educational institution created by Mrs. Morgan.

FOOTNOTES

¹Edwin A. Leonard, Jr. As the Sowing: The First Fifty Years of the Principia (St. Louis: The Principia Corporation, 1951). This history of The Principia has been the major source of information about the school.

²Mary Kimball Morgan was educated through high school in the St. Louis Public Schools. Her family was well-off enough to plan to send her east to college, but because of poor health, she was tutored at home. When she began the school her

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

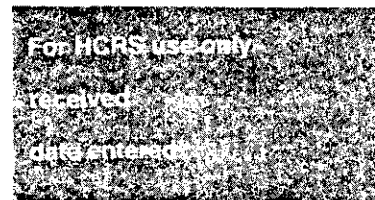
**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

PRINCIPIA/PAGE-PARK YMCA GYMNASIUM

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 4



only experience as an educator had been as a Methodist Sunday School teacher. Mrs. Morgan became well-versed in current educational methods, theory and materials but before any were incorporated into the program of The Principia, they were subjected to her intense scrutiny as a convert to the Christian Science point of view. Her leadership was demonstrated by the notable loyalty and generosity of the men and women who worked with her.

³Leonard, p. 58, footnote #1.

⁴While no specifically Christian Science beliefs were taught in the classroom, an hour each morning was set aside for independent study by the older students of Science and Health and the Bible. The teachers, staff and trustees of The Principia have always been Christian Scientists, available to support the development of Christian Science spiritual and moral values in the students.

⁵Leonard, p. 88.

⁶Ibid, pp. 19-20.

⁷Interview with Marcia Vaughan (Mrs. J. Terrell Vaughan), St. Louis, Missouri, 15 May 1981.

⁸In 1923, Maybeck visited The Principia and a site purchased in St. Louis County for the new campus. His plans were almost completed by 1930 when it was discovered that a highway was projected to bisect the campus site. A spectacular property in Elsah, Illinois, was secured the same year and Maybeck altered his designs to suit the

⁹Although enrollment dropped significantly during the Depression, the school never altered its policy of accepting only children of Christian Scientists.

¹⁰The Junior Kindergarden was initiated, funded and operated by the Junior League of Saint Louis for over ten years beginning in 1964. Its operation on the old Principia campus is sponsored by the "Y".

¹¹N. Webster Moore, "125 Years of the Black Y.M.C.A., 1853-1978." St. Louis, ca. 1978. (mimeographed.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Leonard, Edwin S., Jr. As The Sowing: The First Fifty Years of The Principia.
St. Louis: The Principia Corporation, 1951.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1.3 acres

Quadrangle name Clayton, MO

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A 15 737260 4123251210
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

The Principia/Page-Park YMCA Gymnasium is located on the northwest corner of City Block 3808E. The boudaries are as follows: beginning at the southeast corner of Minerva and

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

11. Form Prepared By @ Landmarks Association of St. Louis, Inc., 1981.

name/title ¹ Jane M. Porter, Researcher; Carolyn Hewes Toft, Editor

organization Landmarks Association of St. Louis, Inc. date 15 June 1981

street & number 706 Chestnut Street, Room 1217 telephone (314) 421-6474

city or town St. Louis state MO 63101

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Director, Department of Natural Resources
and State Historic Preservation Officer

date

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Affect:

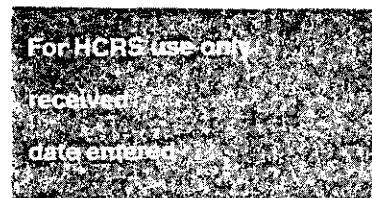
date

Chief of Register

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

PRINCIPIA/PAGE-PARK YMCA GYMNASIUM



Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 1

2. Moore, Webster N. "125 Years of the Black Y.M.C.A., 1853-1978." St. Louis, ca. 1978. (Mimeographed.)
3. Vaughan, Marcia (Mrs. J. Terrell). Alumna of The Principia. Interview, St. Louis, Missouri. 15 May 1981.

ITEM NUMBER 10

PAGE 1

Montclair continue southward 119 feet; thence turning eastward, continue 141 feet; thence turning northward continue 105 feet; thence turning eastward continue 296 feet; thence turning northward continue 94 feet; thence turning westward continue 437 feet to point of origin.

ITEM NUMBER 11

PAGE 1

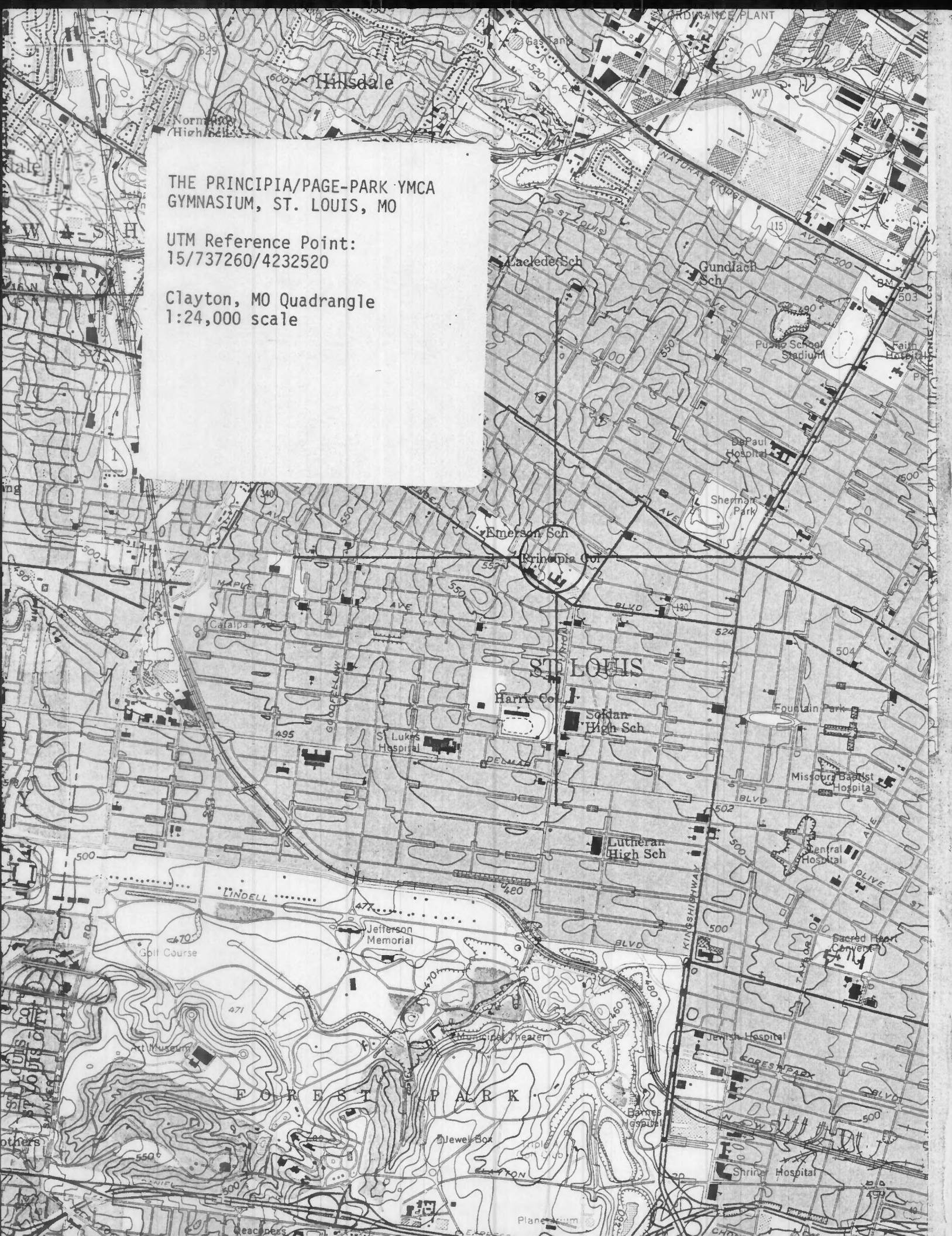
2. James M. Denny, Section Chief, Nominations-Survey
and State Contact Person
Department of Natural Resources
Historic Preservation Program
P.O. Box 176
Jefferson City

July 1981

(314) 751-4096

Missouri 65102

Clayton, MO Quadrangle
1:24,000 scale



THE PRINCIPAL/PAGE-PARK YMCA
GYMNASIUM, ST. LOUIS, MO

Site Plan

Pat Hays Baer, Draftsman
June, 1981

MINERVA AVE.

5564

1344

MONTCLAIR AVE.

CB 3808E

--- 1919

--- 1910



SITE PLAN: PRINCIPIA GYMNASIUM/
PAGE - PARK YMCA

THE PRINCIPIA/PAGE-PARK YMCA
GYMNASIUM, ST. LOUIS, MO

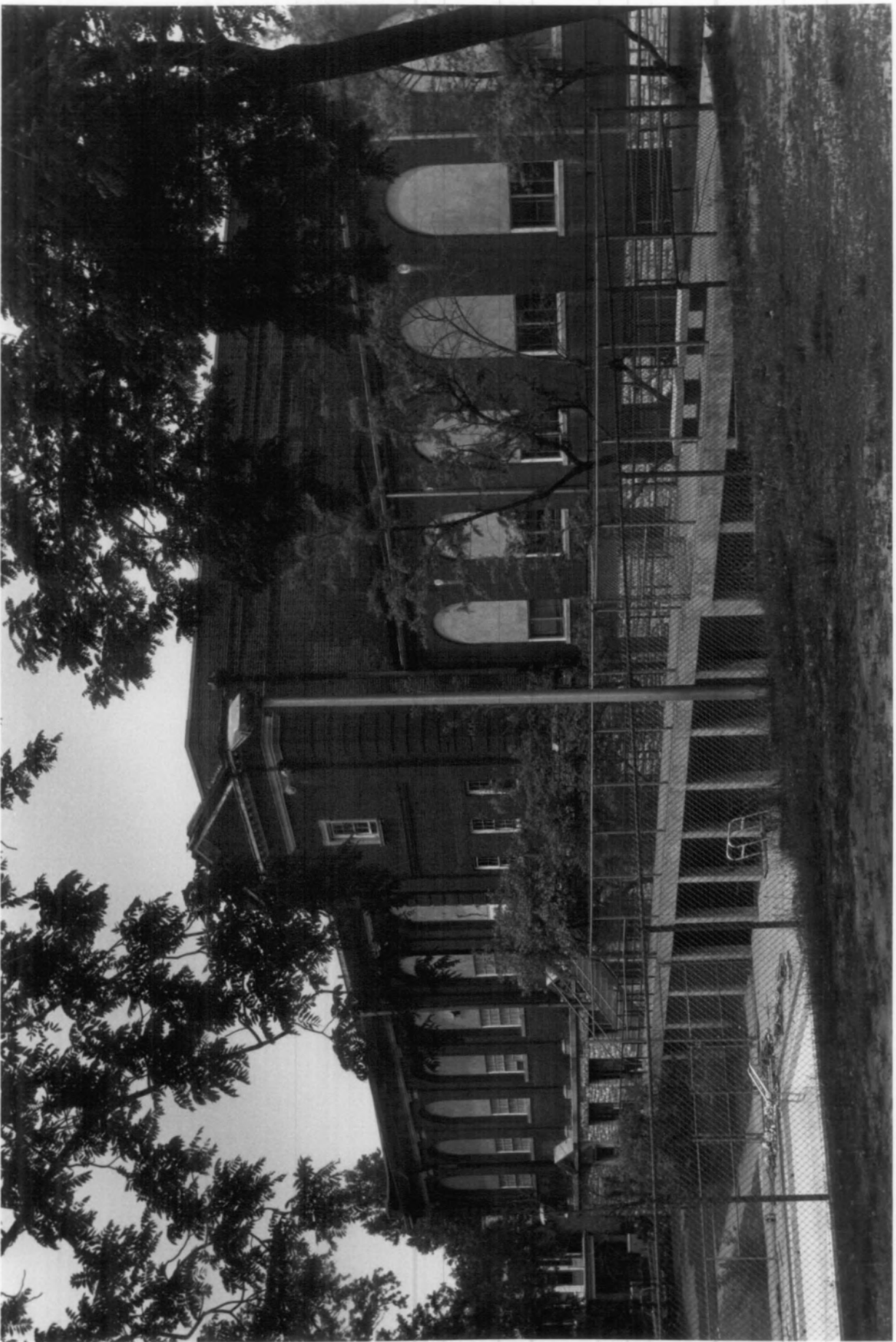
#1 of 3 South facade

Photographer: Jane M. Porter

Date: May, 1981

Negative: Landmarks Association
of St. Louis, Inc.

Camera facing northwest.



THE PRINCIPIA/PAGE-PARK YMCA
GYMNASIUM, ST. LOUIS, MO

#2 of 3 North facade

Photographer: Jane M. Porter

Date: May, 1981

Negative: Landmarks Association
of St. Louis, Inc.

Camera facing southeast.



THE PRINCIPIA/PAGE-PARK YMCA
GYMNASIUM, ST. LOUIS, MO

#3 of 3 Aerial view of The
Principia Campus

Photographer: Unknown

Date: 1954

Original: Archives, Principia
College, Elsah, IL

Negative: Landmarks Association
of St. Louis, Inc.

Photocopy: Spectrum, 1981.

